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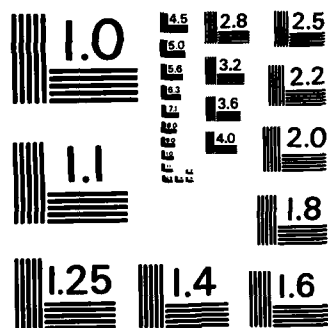
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A HAND NOTE

POLAND IN CRISIS

A. Ross Johnson

July 1982

Prepared for

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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→ This Rand Note analyzes the rise of the Solidarity trade union in Poland, its suppression by martial law, and the effect on Soviet interests in Eastern Europe. The Note concludes that the martial law regime established in Poland in December 1981 is not a stable system of rule. The Soviets can hardly consider the Polish crisis over. The Jaruzelski regime has made little progress in developing a viable "normalized" political system. The Polish crisis has further undermined the legitimacy of Soviet-style political systems elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The Polish military has overshadowed the Polish Communist Party while being distracted from its external Warsaw Pact missions. And the Polish crisis has increased the potential for violent instability in the Eastern part of Europe. ←

A RAND NOTE

POLAND IN CRISIS

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Prepared for

The United States Air Force

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PREFACE

This Note was prepared as part of the Project AIR FORCE study, "Soviet Vulnerabilities in Eastern Europe," under the direction of the author. This project seeks to illuminate the security issues posed for the United States by the problems and opportunities the USSR will face in the 1980s in Eastern Europe. It addresses economic, political, and military dimensions of the challenge to Soviet interests in Eastern Europe.

The present Note examines the Polish crisis of 1980-1982, especially the rise of Solidarity and its suppression by martial law. Unlike many developments in Communist countries, the Polish crisis unfolded in a semi-open manner; indicative was the presence of Western television crews at the birth of Solidarity in the Gdansk shipyards in August 1980. Comprehensive analyses must exploit many sources of information: the more revealing liberalized official Polish media, both regional and national; the legal, quasi-legal, and "underground" publications of Solidarity and other organizations; Polish emigre publications abroad; the well-informed reports of Western correspondents in Poland; and the testimony of participants in the Polish developments from many walks of life who are now in the West. There is sufficient published and potential interview data on Solidarity alone for a multi-year study. This Note utilizes only a small fraction of that potential data base. It is a preliminary essay, intended to provide in a timely manner an interpretation of the evolution and significance of the Polish crisis as of July 1, 1982. A subsequent report will expand, document, and update the present analysis.

SUMMARY

The Polish workers' protest movement that gave birth to the independent trade union, Solidarity, was the first mass, nonviolent challenge to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Solidarity wrested concessions from the regime in 1980-1981 by means of strikes, which exerted sufficient pressure to force the regime to accept or implement social, economic, and political reforms. Solidarity assumed a part of the function of defending national and individual rights that Poland's powerful Roman Catholic Church had exercised alone through the 1970s. The Church itself began to play a more political role, mediating between the regime and Solidarity; simultaneously, the Church's institutional prerogatives expanded. In the wake of Solidarity's activism, much of the regime apparatus was influenced by a current of liberalization and democratization: Rural Solidarity was organized, the youth organization was reshaped, professional organizations such as the journalists' association were revamped; and the parliament asserted itself vis-a-vis the government and Party.

The Communist Party proclaimed "socialist renewal," but the Party leadership failed to initiate a single reform. Solidarity and the Church assumed such importance only because of the demoralization and paralysis in the Party itself. The democratization movement symbolized by Solidarity affected primary and regional Party organizations in 1981 and explained the unprecedented degree of openness and the contested elections at the Ninth Party Congress. Nonetheless, the Party leadership under Stanislaw Kania retained overall control at the

Congress and perpetuated both its own position and the powers of the Party apparatus. But the Kania leadership failed to define a political program for the Party, and continued regime paralysis led Solidarity, meeting in its own Congress in September, to assume a more active approach to a solution of the crisis. Solidarity's leaders also responded to pressures from workers both within and outside the union for enterprise self-management.

As economic conditions deteriorated after the Solidarity Congress, political tensions mounted. The parliament, the official media, and other parts of the political system were further liberalized. But as reformers left or were expelled from the Party in large numbers, the Party apparatus itself became more conservative and dissatisfied with the leadership's gradualist approach to combatting Solidarity. In October 1981, leadership of the Party was entrusted to Defense Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski and the army.

Jaruzelski had assumed the premiership in February. Filling the political vacuum resulting from the disintegration of the Communist Party, generals assumed other prominent government positions. The army was the only state body able to function effectively and enjoy a degree of support among the people. Initially, Jaruzelski and the military leadership backed the search for a political approach to rolling back Solidarity and abjured the use of force. But having assumed the Party leadership and evidently believing that the possibilities for a peaceful defusing of Solidarity's challenge had been exhausted, the Polish military leadership, in the name of preserving Communist rule and the forms of Polish statehood, launched a state of war against the Polish nation on December 13, 1981. Jaruzelski thus thrust the military

institution, whose autonomy and professionalism he had attempted to foster, into a role of supreme political leadership, for which the professional military, like Jaruzelski himself, was quite ill-prepared.

Planning for martial law evidently went forward following the Solidarity Congress and was completed in November, after the regime's proposed Front of National Accord was rejected by Solidarity and the Church as an effort to control, rather than extend partnership to, Solidarity. The catalyst of the decision to impose martial law was not Solidarity's verbal radicalism but its inherently expanding challenge to the Party's organizational monopoly on key issues of Party organization, control of the media, and responsibility for public order. The regime probably also calculated that worsening economic conditions and protraction of the crisis had weakened some of Solidarity's popular support.

Martial law was encouraged and perhaps demanded by the Soviet leadership, which sought after August 1980 to end Solidarity's challenge to Communist Party rule in Poland--the sharpest challenge to Soviet interests in the region since 1945. Moscow threatened invasion on several occasions, yet did not use its military forces against Poland, since it evidently appreciated that unopposed military intervention was unlikely. The Soviet leadership continued to hope that the Polish Party--if not the Kania leadership, then a successor leadership--could restabilize Poland without Soviet military intervention. It probably sought Kania's replacement in June 1981. After the Solidarity Congress in September, Moscow surely assisted in the preparations for the imposition of martial law.

The crackdown by Polish security and military forces on December 13, 1981, was largely bloodless, in part because Solidarity was not prepared for active resistance. Yet however efficiently executed, imposition of martial law occurred not in pursuit of any positive political conception. Martial law was imposed as a desperate gamble justified almost openly as the only alternative to Soviet invasion and military suppression.

As of late June 1982, essential features of the martial law regime remained in place: "militarization" of Party and state bodies, internment of thousands of Solidarity members and sympathizers, suspension of Solidarity and other organizations that had blossomed in 1980-1981. Yet the martial law regime was not a stable system of rule. The overshadowing of the Party by the army struck at the roots of the Communist system. The army's internal functions reduced its military contribution to the Warsaw Pact. The internees were unsentenced prisoners. Church-state relations were stalemated even as the Church actively assumed some of the de facto political functions exercised by Solidarity. Sooner rather than later, the regime seemed likely to face the choice: either to relax its policies and seek limited reconciliation with Polish society or to crack down harder in an effort to end opposition to its rule. Moderates of the martial law regime, probably including Jaruzelski himself, favored limited accommodation (albeit not a return to political pluralism) but feared that even partial relaxation might only fuel popular dissatisfactions. A regime so insecure seemed more likely to turn to tougher measures to bolster its rule. Such repression would increase the chances of violent

protest--a real possibility in any case. More force would probably be required to end popular protests a second time around. It is unlikely that domestic violence which the security organs were unable to contain could be put down by the Polish army alone; Soviet intervention would probably result. Conscripts and officers of regular military units used to back up internal security forces on and after December 13 evidently experienced considerable doubts about their role.

As of late June 1982, Moscow and the Polish leadership are certainly more satisfied with the current situation in Poland than they were with the situation in 1980-1981. Yet the balance sheet is hardly solely positive. The Jaruzelski regime has yet to construct a viable "normalized" political system. The Polish crisis has further undermined the legitimacy of Soviet-style political systems elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The Polish military has overshadowed the Polish Communist Party while being distracted from its external Warsaw Pact missions. And the Polish crisis has increased the potential for violent instability in the Eastern part of Europe.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This essay has benefited from the discussions of a Rand-organized workshop on Poland in August 1981 (Arnold L. Horelick, A. Ross Johnson, and Pedro Ramet, Poland After the Ninth Party Congress: Assessment and Prospects, Proceedings of the Rand Workshop, August 4-5, 1981, The Rand Corporation, N-1809-OUSD, December 1981). Barbara Kliszewski provided invaluable research assistance. While the interpretations presented here are those of the author, he is grateful to Alexander Alexiev, Robert W. Boyd, Michael Checinski, Dale R. Herspring, Arnold L. Horelick, Walter Parchomenko, Alan Platt, and Myron Rush for comments on an earlier draft.

POLES ABOUT POLAND

THE WORKERS' PROTEST

... a new generation of workers emerged ... aware of their place in society and determined to draw all the necessary conclusions from the fact that, according to the ideological premises of the system, their class has been accorded the leading role in society ... that conviction, that certitude, and that unshakable will emerged for the first time with such force during those August days. The river which changes landscapes and climates started flowing in our land ... whatever happens, we shall be living in a different Poland as of the summer of 1980 ... the workers spoke up on the most essential matters with their own voice ... they are determined to speak up again. Surely there cannot be anyone who does not understand that. (Ryszard Kapuscinski, "Notes from the Seaboard," Kultura, Warsaw, September 14, 1980.)

REGIME HARDLINERS AND MODERATES

Comrade Najdowski proposed a change in the present [political] formula ... the formula of overcoming the crisis by peaceful means and with our own resources, to a new formula, that the crisis be overcome, at all costs, with our own resources.... I should like to ask whether [the second formula] envisages ... the use of force for the purpose of solving the crisis? ... I continue to favor political solutions, since ... the departure from such solutions leaves no way of retreat. One must not forget that our Party is responsible to history and to the nation for the bloodshed in Poznan [1956] and on the Baltic coast [1970]; it is impossible that such dramatic events could take place for a third time, and if this were to happen after all, our Party would not survive.... (Mieczyslaw Rakowski, Speech to the 11th Party Plenum, Radio Warsaw, June 10, 1981.)

ON THE USE OF FORCE

... attempts to deal with [social] contradictions with the help of violence, force, or confrontation are bound to fail. Neither in June 1956 in Poznan, nor in 1970 on the Baltic Coast, nor in June 1976 in Radom, nor, finally, on a smaller scale in March [1981] in Bydgoszcz did the method of force show itself capable of resolving contradictions. On the

contrary, it only leads to contradictions becoming still greater, to the polarization of forces ... (Jerzy Wiatr, Kultura, June 21, 1981.)

WHO IS TO BLAME

[The Party] disintegrated, I agree. Which is quite clear since the military had to take its place in the government. Who could deny that it went bankrupt, intellectually and politically, that it was unable to organize the society, to get the country out of the disaster, even to defend the state? In the end you are right; we are the ones to be blamed, not Solidarity.... (Interview with Rakowski by Oriana Fallaci, The Times, February 23, 1982.)

THE PARTY AND THE ARMY

Of course, I would have preferred the agony of the country be ended by a group of agitators from the Central Committee, not by military divisions. However, the latter was the only still effective medicine left in the medicine chest. (Jerzy Urban, government press spokesman, Polityka, March 6, 1982.)

THE FUTURE

The military has no ready-made formula for restoring the country's health. Only society can have such formulae. (Wieslaw Gornicki, military press spokesman, The New York Times, December 28, 1981.)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Poland occupies a pivotal position in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. It is the largest and, with 36 million inhabitants, the most populous of the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact states. Its Communist system, established under Soviet tutelage at the end of World War II, has always been less repressive than the Soviet system; even at the height of Stalinism, for example, there were no "show trials" and executions of purged Communist leaders in Poland. With the end of the Stalinist era, domestic crisis resulted in the return to power in October 1956 of Party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka (purged in 1948 for "nationalism"). Although Gomulka quickly betrayed the hopes of the liberal and national forces that had backed him in 1956, reimposing stricter Party controls at home and stressing fidelity to the USSR, Poland continued to deviate from Soviet preferences in key matters: the private character of its agriculture, the uniquely strong national as well as religious role of the Roman Catholic Church (so clearly demonstrated during the visit to Poland of the "Polish Pope" in June 1979), and the Western outlook of a Polish nation largely uncommitted to Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Domestic economic and social problems throughout the 1960s culminated in strikes and riots of industrial workers in the coastal cities (Gdansk, Gdynia, Szczecin, and Sopot) in December 1970. This crisis caused the fall of Gomulka and his replacement as Party leader by Edward Gierek (formerly head of the regional Party organization in Silesia). One of Gomulka's last acts had been to conclude a treaty with West Germany normalizing relations and embodying formal West German

acceptance of Poland's postwar territorial boundaries. This normalization had the major consequence of reducing Polish concern with a West German threat to Polish security interests and undermining the contention of the Polish Communist leadership that only complete loyalty to the USSR could safeguard Poland's national existence.

Gomulka's rule thus ended with a fading perception of a West German threat; the Gierek era began with an ambitious economic strategy of simultaneously forcing the pace of industrialization and satisfying consumer demands. Implementation of this strategy involved a quantum increase in Poland's economic ties with the West but neglected the country's traditional hard-currency-earning exports. By the mid-1970s, this misguided economic strategy had proved unsuccessful.[1] In 1976, the announcement of pending foodstuff price rises again provoked worker strikes and unrest. This time, having drawn lessons from the December 1970 riots, Gierek backed down and rescinded the price increases. Soviet loans were granted to help the economy. But economic conditions worsened, leading to increased popular dissatisfaction. Dissident intellectuals became active, organizing in such groups as the "Committee for the Defense of the Workers." The Church became more assertive. In early 1977, the Party leadership bowed to popular pressure and abandoned its efforts to make explicit reference to Party rule and alliance with the USSR in a revised state constitution.[2] These developments were indicative of the depth of national tradition, the anti-Sovietism, the

[1] See J. M. Montias, Poland: Roots of the Economic Crisis, Working Paper No. 848, Yale University, Institution for Social and Policy Studies, March 1982; Zbigniew M. Fallenbuchl, "Poland's Economic Crisis," Problems of Communism, March-April 1982.

[2] For a review of these events see A. Ross Johnson, Eastern Europe Looks West, The Rand Corporation, P-6032, November 1977.

extent of popular resistance to a Soviet-style political system, and the pro-Western orientation in Poland.

In mid-1980, socioeconomic tensions reached crisis proportions when yet another attempt by the government to preemptively increase foodstuff prices led to an outbreak of strikes that assumed massive proportions. From these events was born The Independent and Self-Governing Union, Solidarity.[3]

[3] See Jane Leftwich Curry, The Polish Crisis of 1980 and the Politics of Survival, The Rand Corporation, P-6562, November 1980.

II. THE RISE AND SUPPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY

PEACEFUL REVOLUTION

Developments in Poland since mid-1980 have posed the sharpest challenge to Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe since Stalin imposed Communist rule on the bayonets of the Red Army, through the threat or use of force, in 1944-1945.

There have, to be sure, been previous challenges to Soviet domination of the area. In 1948, Tito successfully defied Stalin, primarily because he headed a Communist Party, modeled on the disciplined Soviet Party, which had come to power on its own. In 1956, crises in Poland and Hungary hastened the end of the extreme Stalinist form of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe; in Poland, a liberalizing Communist Party was able to defy the Kremlin (although subsequently many of the gains of the "Polish October" were reversed), while in Hungary the Party was swept aside by an anti-Communist and anti-Soviet national movement which was suppressed by Soviet military force. In 1968, the Czechoslovak experiment in "socialism with a human face" was aborted by the coercive presence of the Soviet Army, which occupied the country.

The challenge that Polish workers raised in 1980 was different-- and even more serious. Their protest movement created the first mass, nonviolent challenge to Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. Their strategy was one of gradualism and social self-organization; in the words of dissident intellectual Jacek Kuron, "Don't burn Party committees [as had happened in 1956, 1970, and 1976] but create your own committees.... Create social pluralism behind the facade of a totalitarian Party." [1] Since the mid-1970s, Polish intellectuals had

[1] See Kuron's article, Die Welt, August 18, 1980.

followed this approach, cutting their ties with the regime and organizing their own "publishing houses," "flying universities," and other activities on such a scale as to make the term "dissident" a misnomer; it was the committed Party member that was an anomaly in Poland in the late 1970s.[2]

After mid-1980, Polish workers followed the example of the intellectuals on a mass scale, organizing themselves in the Solidarity trade union--and in the process disproving the assumption of Communist leaders and Western observers alike that a Communist regime ensured organizational monopoly by the Party and social atomization. For Solidarity quickly expanded "from below" to include nearly ten million members--most of the work force--from the coal mines of Silesia to the offices of the foreign information agency, Interpress. At the Nowa Huta steel works near Krakow--supposedly the showcase of socialism--90 percent of the work force joined Solidarity.[3] Over one million of its members were Party members--more than a third of the total Party membership.

The catalyst for the rise of Solidarity was yet another attempt by the regime to preemptively raise the price of foodstuffs. Strikes broke out in July 1980 and assumed mass proportions (involving perhaps a half-million workers); they were strongest on the Baltic coast but spread throughout the country. In contrast to 1970, violence was avoided, the workers stuck to their demands, and after hesitating and negotiating for

[2] See Tadeusz Szafar, Contemporary Political Opposition in Poland, mimeographed, 1979; Adam Bromke, "The Opposition in Poland," Problems of Communism, September-October 1978, pp. 37-51.

[3] Warsaw Television interview in Nowa Huta, September 29, 1980, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), II, October 1, 1980.

a month, the regime agreed to far-reaching economic and political concessions. The government accepted the Gdansk Interfactory Strike Committee as a negotiating partner and concluded with it on August 31, 1980, the so-called Gdansk Agreement (which was complemented by similar agreements with striking workers in Szczecin and Silesia). These agreements granted the right to organize an independent trade union, the right to strike, fewer restrictions on the press and other mass media (including a more liberal censorship law and radio broadcasts of Church masses), a weakened personnel-control (nomenklatura) system, and other worker demands.[4]

Solidarity's leaders had learned well the "salami tactics" the Party had used against earlier reform currents, in 1956-1957, 1970-1971, and 1976. Now they turned these tactics against the Party, keeping up the pressure for implementation of the August 1980 agreements. Through the use and threat of strikes, Solidarity wrested one concession after another from the regime in late 1980 and early 1981, rather than (as the regime surely expected when it signed the Gdansk Agreement) vice versa. Even when the regime attempted to take a firm stand on the events in Bydgoszcz in late March 1981 (where police, probably at the instigation of hardline leaders in Warsaw, beat Solidarity activists for the first time since August 1980), Solidarity credibly threatened a general strike and again won key concessions.

This point is crucial to understanding the dynamics of Polish developments after August 1980 and in considering whether Solidarity itself, because of excessive radicalism, was partly responsible for the military-led crackdown in December 1981. During this period, the Party

[4] Text in Polityka, September 6, 1980.

leadership embraced the slogan of "socialist renewal" and tolerated a number of far-reaching sociopolitical reforms. Yet all these reforms were forced on the Party leadership by Solidarity and by reformist lower-level elements within the ruling system. In contrast to the course of events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, it is impossible to ascribe a single reform implemented or considered during this period to the initiative of the Party leadership. Whatever the rhetoric, it was only confrontation of the regime with the only available non-violent weapon--strikes--that explained the rise of Solidarity and the progress toward liberalization of the Polish political system in 1980-1981.

Solidarity was more a movement than an organization. It was constituted not along centralist lines but on a regional basis; although Lech Walesa was the union's most charismatic and important leader, regional Solidarity leaders had great power. Unlike the Party, Solidarity lacked "democratic centralism" and enjoyed internal democracy. Just as Solidarity could not renounce the strike weapon without fatally undermining itself, the national leadership could not impose strict discipline on the regional union organizations. Disputes arose within the Solidarity leadership, but the differences were chiefly tactical: Solidarity radicals were inclined to press even harder to force the regime to make concessions.

The workers' protest movement organized in Solidarity was the motor force of all developments in Poland in 1980-1981 and was thus properly the central focus of Western analyses and commentaries. Yet this focus did obscure the fact that by the fall of 1980 not only had Solidarity largely replaced the old "transmission belt" trade unions, but in the wake of its activity much of the regime apparatus had been peacefully

restructured. Poland's peasantry became politically active, organizing in "Rural Solidarity," which demanded economic support for Poland's private farmers (who still cultivate most of the land, but who have been discriminated against in favor of state and cooperative farms). The government first refused to register Rural Solidarity as a union; it accepted the movement's union status (in the Bydgoszcz Agreement of April 17, 1981) only after the beating of activists in Bydgoszcz led Solidarity to prepare for a general strike.[5]

Students reshaped from below the national student organization; a student sit-in in Lodz in February was only the most dramatic event of a nationwide protest which forced the regime to register a new Independent Student Organization, relax requirements for compulsory courses in Marxism-Leninism (and Russian), and permit peer election of university administrators. Professional and intellectual organizations, including the journalists' association and the writers' association, were similarly revamped. The journalists' association was particularly active in appealing for a more informative media system; it elected as its chairman the liberal journalist, Stefan Bratkowski. At the same time, Solidarity and the other new organizations began to publicize their own viewpoints, both in the official press and in new publications they controlled--the latter a fundamental challenge to Party control over the mass media.[6] The parliament (Sejm) became a forum of relatively frank discussion.

[5] Vinocur dispatch, The New York Times, April 18, 1981; J. Sadecki article, Gazeta Krakowska, March 23, 1981; "[Report by Government Commission]," Zycie Warszawy, March 30, 1981.

[6] See Jane Leftwich Curry and A. Ross Johnson, The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in Poland; Summary Report, The Rand Corporation, R-2627, December 1980, pp. 13-15.

The Polish Catholic Church--the age-old bulwark of Polish nationalism--played a much more important role during this period (as it did throughout the crisis) than might have been assumed from its public statements. Temporarily outpaced by the spreading worker movement in the summer of 1980, the Church subsequently lent its authority to backing the social protest movement spearheaded by Solidarity while seeking to avoid cataclysm.[7] The authority of the Church had been defended by Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski in a series of skirmishes with the regime ever since 1956 and was enhanced by the fact of the "Polish Pope"--the election of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla to the Papacy in 1978. On key occasions, such as when Solidarity activists were beaten in Bydgoszcz in March 1981, Cardinal Wyszynski spoke out unequivocally in support of the workers.[8]

More importantly, the Cardinal (and in the background, the Pope) was instrumental in mediating between Solidarity and the regime over Bydgoszcz and on all other key occasions. A three-man group of lay Catholics established at Wyszynski's initiative played an important role in mediating between Solidarity and the regime in August 1980; the Pope and the Cardinal counseled moderation in connection with the delayed registration of Solidarity in November 1980; Church leaders attended the

[7] In a letter of August 26, 1980, the Episcopate affirmed that the "right to set up free trade unions is one of the fundamental rights ..." (Radio Free Europe Research, August 1980: The Strikes in Poland, Munich, 1980, p. 138).

[8] "The state authorities must realize they serve society ... the authorities must bear in mind the consequences of every irresponsible step taken by members of the forces of public order" (Pastoral announcement during mass, Radio Warsaw, March 22, 1981, in FBIS, II, March 23, 1981). It was a measure of the Polish situation that Radio Warsaw broadcast this statement.

ceremonies in Gdansk in December commemorating those killed in the 1970 unrest. Wyszynski met with Jaruzelski, as Prime Minister, for the first time on March 27, 1981, in an effort to defuse the tension that had arisen over the Bydgoszcz incident. After Wyszynski's death in May, Jozef Glemp was named to succeed him. Glemp traveled to Gdansk in September, as Solidarity's Congress began, to celebrate mass with a plea for moderation. In November 1981, Glemp met personally with Jaruzelski and Walesa in an effort to help facilitate a meaningful Front of National Accord and then intervened with both Party and Solidarity leaders in a last unsuccessful effort to defuse the mounting tension.[9] Hence, while after August 1980 Solidarity assumed some of the functions of articulating social and national aspirations and defending individual rights that the Church had performed alone through the 1970s, the rise of Solidarity forced the Church to play a much more active political role than it had in the past.

The Church's religious prerogatives simultaneously expanded. The status of diocesan seminaries improved, and seminarians were exempted from military service. The Episcopate regained control of Caritas, the social welfare organization. Sunday masses were broadcast on the state radio, Catholic publications were allotted more newsprint, and 120,000 copies of a new Polish-language edition of Osservatore Romano (the Vatican newspaper) were freely imported.[10]

These developments further weakened the Communist Party. The Gdansk Agreement was forced upon the Party. Its acceptance involved the

[9] See the account (based in part on interviews with Church leaders) by Hansjakob Stehle, "Church and Pope in the Polish Crisis," The World Today, April 1982.

[10] Ibid.

replacement of Gierek by Stanislaw Kania (the Politburo member in charge of military and security affairs) as Party leader; the new Kania leadership decided against the use of force. But even though the costs of a violent suppression of Solidarity seemed too high to the regime in August-September 1980, this did not mean it had accepted the independent union as legitimate. The regime doubtless considered itself engaged in a holding action, preserving what could be saved of Party monopoly until it could turn the tide and, just as the Party had done after 1956, undo many, if not all, of the reform measures that had been forced upon it. Politburo member Mieczyslaw Moczar told the Seventh Party Plenum, "Time is our best weapon." [11] But Lenin's dictum for Communists who had to make concessions, "One step back, two steps forward," turned into two steps back--and then five. The tested methods of wearing down the opposition, utilized so effectively during the takeover of power between 1945 and 1948 and again in 1957 and 1971, did not seem to work. For example, when the blossoming of Solidarity led to the collapse of the Central Council of Trade Unions, the Party mounted a rear-guard action to organize so-called "Branch Unions" as an alternative. They too were overshadowed by Solidarity.

The "transmission belts" linking the Party to other social organizations were reversed; the Party leadership hoped that Party members who joined Solidarity could exert pressure on the Solidarity leadership "from below," but instead it quickly found itself the object of such pressure. Indeed, in early 1981 much of the "renewal" movement focused on the Party itself. As in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1968, many lower-level Party organizations were "taken over" by

[11] Trybuna Ludu, December 4, 1980.

reformers who demanded the early convening of a Party Congress in order to elect reformers to top Party bodies by secret ballot. By March, this pressure was such as to force the Kania leadership to set a deadline of July for the convening of the Ninth Party Congress.

In February 1981, after the regime had taken one backward step after another, the post of Prime Minister was entrusted to Defense Minister Wojciech Jaruzelski, making him the leader of what was openly called a "government of national salvation" and Poland's "last chance." [12] Four other generals assumed positions in the Council of Ministers, including that of Minister of the Interior--in itself a departure from the usual Soviet and East European practice. Other military officers occupied formerly civilian posts lower in the administrative hierarchy. These appointments signified a partial shift of the locus of power from the Politburo to the Council of Ministers, with the military playing an enhanced role. Jaruzelski's appointment as Prime Minister was testimony to the importance of the military, as an institution distinct from the Party and a moderate political force (in terms of the range of views within the regime). A poll in mid-1981 showed that the army was then the third most respected institution in Poland, just behind the Church and Solidarity and far ahead of the Party. [13] Jaruzelski, the only person to receive more votes than Kania in his reelection to the Central Committee, appeared to enjoy widespread trust in mid-1981.

[12] Jaruzelski press conference, Radio Warsaw, February 13, 1981, in FBIS, II, February 17, 1981; Margueritte dispatch, Le Figaro, February 11, 1981.

[13] Kultura (Warsaw), June 21, 1981.

Foreign observers sometimes cited the conservative viewpoints of the military daily, Zolnierz Wolnosci, as representing the "military," yet this ignored Zolnierz Wolnosci's role as the organ of the Main Political Administration, in effect an extension of the conservative central Party apparatus.[14] What counted was the outlook of the professional officer corps, headed by Jaruzelski, which was somewhat different. Reacting to the total Soviet domination of the army in the 1950s, the army's involvement in internecine Party conflict in the 1960s, and what it saw as its misuse by political leaders for internal repression (however limited the scale) in 1970, the Polish military in the 1970s became, more than any other Communist military, master of its own house and a moderate regime political force.[15]

As such, the military became the most important element within the Polish regime after mid-1980. Jaruzelski called for a "political solution" in August 1980 and consistently maintained that position through most of 1981. Again and again, he stressed the importance of preserving the "good name" of the army, meaning above all (in his reported words of 1976) "Polish soldiers will not shoot Polish workers." As a professional soldier, Jaruzelski understood best of all the difficulty of using the Polish army for internal repression: Its officer corps was imbued with something of the traditional ethos of the

[14] A poll of young officers indicated that less than 42 percent read Zolnierz Wolnosci, and that percentage read it only because it was obligatory; officers were mainly dissatisfied with the "unsatisfactory level" of its commentaries. (Wojsko Ludowe, September-October, 1980.)

[15] See A. Ross Johnson, Robert W. Dean, and Alexander Alexiev, East European Military Establishments: The Warsaw Pact Northern Tier, R-2417/1-AF/FF, The Rand Corporation, December 1980, especially Section III.

Polish military as the defender of national values; internal security units had been greatly reduced since the 1950s; and most of its conscripts were Solidarity members or otherwise affected by the reform movement prior to enlistment. The ever-present fear was that an attempted hardline crackdown would lead, in Jaruzelski's own words, to "fratricidal violence" and as such would make Soviet military invasion inevitable.[16]

Soviet invasion of Poland had been an ever-present possibility since the fall of 1980. Soviet forces in the Western USSR were mobilized in December 1980 and March 1981 in a manner that suggested preparations for military invasion.[17] That an invasion was not undertaken during this period is testimony to the dilemma which the Polish developments posed for Moscow. Never had the Soviet leadership faced such a challenge to its interests and its very legitimacy, at home as well as in Eastern Europe. For a Communist Party that professes to espouse the historic interests of the working class was challenged, not by intellectuals, but by that working class on a mass scale. This occurred, moreover, in the East European country that is the most important strategically for the USSR and is the linchpin of the Soviet imperial system.

Yet the Soviet leadership evidently understood the enormous costs of military invasion. The Soviet Union has always tolerated more diversity and less Communist orthodoxy in Poland than elsewhere in Eastern Europe, and this is testimony to its sober appreciation of the extent of developed national and social consciousness and Western

[16] See *ibid.*, pp. 62-63, for documentation.

[17] Middleton dispatch, The New York Times, December 10, 1980; Gwerzman dispatch, *ibid.*, March 30, 1981.

orientation in Poland. Moscow doubtless appreciated that unopposed military intervention was unlikely. Poland is not Czechoslovakia, and the USSR would have to expect protracted resistance, including military resistance by Polish army units.[18] It would thus be engaged in a war in the heart of Europe that could spread. Once the Soviets subdued the country, they would have to run it. An invasion and occupation of Poland would stretch already-strained Soviet military and economic resources. The Soviet leaders had their hands full in Afghanistan. And the Western governments indicated that the consequences for East-West relations of a Soviet invasion of Poland would be fundamentally different from the aftermath of the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

So the Soviet leadership temporized, fearing the costs of invasion and hoping that the Polish Party could yet pull its own chestnuts out of the fire.[19] Moscow clearly had not lost all hope in the Polish

[18] It is worth recalling--as Soviet leaders certainly did--the Soviets' experience in Poland in 1956. Then, internal security forces loyal to Gomulka were prepared to forcibly resist Rokossovsky's troops marching on Warsaw, and major Navy and Air Force units were prepared to fight Soviet forces. As Khrushchev recounted,

Marshal Konev and I held consultations with [Polish Defense Minister] Rokossovsky, who was more obedient to us [than the Polish political leadership].... He told us that ... if it were necessary to arrest the growth of these counterrevolutionary elements by force of arms, he was at our disposal.... That was all very well and good, but as we began to ... calculate which Polish regiments we could count on to obey Rokossovsky, the situation began to look somewhat bleak. (Strobe Talbott (ed.), Khrushchev Remembers; The Last Testament, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1974, p. 203.)

[19] Soviet leaders may have taken different views of how to deal with Poland. But we lack evidence (such as that provided by the Czechoslovak leadership itself in 1968) of such policy differences. For an imaginative but not persuasive effort to discern such differences, see Richard D. Anderson, Jr., "Soviet Decisionmaking and Poland," Problems of Communism, March-April 1982.

Communist Party leadership; the Soviets regarded Kania and his associates with contempt as weak men, but not as traitors (in contrast to Nagy and Dubcek, who had been viewed as traitors). Moscow did not appear to doubt the basic loyalty of the Polish Party leaders to Soviet-defined Communist principles. It thus continued to hope that the Polish Party--if not the Kania leadership, then a successor leadership--could succeed in restabilizing Poland without Soviet military intervention.

Having threatened military invasion in March, in June 1981 the Soviet leadership attempted to intervene more directly in the Polish Party itself. In a CPSU Central Committee letter of June 5, 1981, it bluntly expressed its concerns and demanded changes:

Constant concessions to antisocialist forces and their demands have led to a retreat by the Polish Party, step by step, under pressure of domestic counterrevolution, supported by foreign imperialist centers of subversion.... The enemies of socialism ... are waging a struggle for power, and are already winning it ... S. Kania, W. Jaruzelski, and other Polish comrades expressed agreement with our point of view. But nothing has changed, and the policy of concession and compromise has not been corrected.... We believe that there is still a possibility of holding off the worst and avoiding a national catastrophe.... What is needed now is to mobilize all the healthy forces in society.... This requires, first of all, a revolutionary will, within the Party, among its militants and its leadership. Yes, its leadership.... We would like to believe that the Central Committee ... will be up to its historic responsibilities.[20]

This suggests that by late spring, Moscow sought to encourage the replacement of Kania as Polish Party leader with either Politburo member Stefan Olszowski or Tadeusz Grabski, both hardliners. The Soviets may have backed Grabski's attempt to unseat Kania, which he openly tried to

[20] The New York Times, June 11, 1981.

do at the Eleventh Polish Party Plenum in June 1981. The key issue for many speakers at the Plenum was, indeed, the validity of Soviet criticism and whether the leadership should be changed in the wake of the Soviet letter. But Kania was able to retain his post, capitalizing on what many Plenum speakers viewed as both justified Soviet concerns about Poland and improper Soviet interference.[21] In the wake of the Soviet letter and as a result of it, Kania's position strengthened, a potential groundswell of support for radical and liberal candidates for the new Central Committee to be elected at the upcoming Ninth Congress waned, and hardliners failed to advance in the top leadership. Whatever the Soviet intent, Kania seemed to strengthen his position at the Ninth Party Congress in July--but he retained his post for only three months thereafter.

THE NINTH PARTY CONGRESS

In early 1981, as noted, reformist tendencies began to make headway in the Polish United Workers' Party itself. Quite understandably, this current was strongest in regions of the country where the workers' protest movement itself was strongest, especially the Baltic coast. Party organizations in many large enterprises, such as the Nowa Huta steel works, were taken over by reformers, who advocated democratization of the Party as well as the political system. A few of the provincial Party organizations, most prominently the Gdansk organization, espoused such liberalization. The rallying cry of the Party liberals became the demand for an early convening of a Party congress (the Eighth Congress had been held in February 1980), which was intended to extend and ratify

[21] See Polish Situation Report 11/81, Radio Free Europe Research, June 19, 1981; "XI Plenum KC PZPR," Nowe Drogi, No. 7, 1981.

the process of democratization of the Party then under way. Under pressure from the reformers, the Ninth Party Congress was scheduled for July 1981.

Democratization of lower levels of the Party became quite apparent between April and June 1981, as preparations for the Congress unfolded. A large number of enterprise secretaries were replaced by individuals who sympathized, at least in part, with Solidarity. There was a wholesale turnover in the composition of regional Party committees. Between September 1980 and May 1981 the regional first secretaryship changed hands in 28 (of 49) voivodships; more than half of the other regional secretaryships similarly changed hands, usually after hotly contested Party elections.[22] Local Party meetings often became free-wheeling and undisciplined affairs. Central Party leaders who attended such meetings were routinely critically questioned and sometimes denounced. The initial phase of the selection of delegates for the Ninth Congress demonstrated the degree to which democratic centralism had weakened; local organizations generally acted on their own in choosing delegates for the Congress, and sometimes they explicitly rejected delegates proposed by the Party center.[23] In the second half of 1980, the reform movement embodied in Solidarity had initially seemed to bypass the Party, but in the first half of 1981 the Party too was infected. This seemed to portend a liberalization and transformation of the Leninist Party such as had begun in Poland in 1956 and had gone quite far in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

[22] T. Kolodziejczyk, "Nad przemianami w aparacie," Zycie Partii, September 25, 1981.

[23] See "Poland's Extraordinary Ninth Party Congress, Part I. The Delegates: Who They Were and How They Were Elected," Radio Free Europe Research, July 27, 1981.

The Ninth "Extraordinary" Congress convened in Warsaw on July 14, 1981. It was marked by a degree of spontaneity and openness never before seen at a Soviet bloc Party Congress (as indicated by the reporting of Polish and Western journalists who had relatively free access to the deliberations). The Polish equivalent of Western-style party floor fights occurred on a number of issues--including the procedure for electing the Party First Secretary.

Selection of the Central Committee involved an unprecedented opportunity for choice on the part of Congress delegates. The usual practice at Soviet bloc Party Congresses is for delegates to "approve" a list submitted by the Party leadership. At the Ninth Congress, delegates voted in secret ballot for 200 Central Committee members from a list of 279 candidates. As noted, the process of generating that list had been strongly influenced from below, and many prominent leaders had been eliminated from consideration even before the Congress convened. This trend continued at the Congress itself. Prominent liberals and conservatives alike were crossed off the list, including eleven of the fifteen incumbent Politburo and Secretariat members; indeed, the new Central Committee was composed of political unknowns to such an extent that even Zycie Warszawy (July 28, 1981) commented that it was hard to say much about them except that "they are new people." The only common motivation of delegates in crossing candidates off the list seemed to be anti-authority; a political unknown, especially one with clear "working class" ties, was apparently preferred over any establishment figure. The new Central Committee contained only 16 holdovers from the old body, and included only 8 of the 49 provincial Party secretaries.

Yet the Ninth Congress was not a runaway Congress; behind the scenes, the central leadership did retain control of the composition of the top Party bodies and the content of Party resolutions. In 1968 in Czechoslovakia, the abortive Fourteenth Party Congress portended the social democratization of the Communist Party--and that prospect was perhaps the major factor in the timing of the Soviet occupation. The Ninth Polish Party Congress was, in contrast, a Congress of continuation, at least as regards the central Party apparatus. Kania was easily reaffirmed as First Secretary; he and the informal inner circle of influential Politburo members--Barcikowski, Jaruzelski, Olszowski--stage-managed the choice of the new Politburo and Secretariat. These bodies, too, experienced considerable turnover (the 14-member Politburo had 3 holdovers; the 7-member Secretariat, 2). These changes were, however, primarily a consequence of top-level intra-elite relationships and the elimination of incumbents from the Central Committee rather than the result of specific influence from Congress delegates on the choice of new members of these bodies.

The atmosphere of spontaneity at the Congress notwithstanding, the Kania leadership retained overall control--and was able to defuse the sometimes far-reaching radical demands of special lower-level interests represented among the Congress delegations. Moreover, in the final stage of preparations for the Congress, the Kania leadership was able to reassert greater influence over the choice of delegates. It was also able to defuse the so-called "horizontal linkage" movement--a grouping of reformist Communists centered in Torun who sought direct ties with like-minded groupings elsewhere in the country, bypassing the Central

Party apparatus and thus formally disregarding "democratic centralism." [24]

If the Kania leadership managed to perpetuate itself at the Ninth Congress and maintain the central Party apparatus largely intact, it utterly failed to define a political line for the Party. Convening in what was ostensibly a Congress of "socialist renewal" and confronted with enormous national economic and social problems, the Party turned inward, a sign of the massive crisis of confidence in the Party that penetrated lower Party ranks. Despite the exhortations of Deputy Premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski on the second day of the Congress, no vision of the future emerged. [25] "Socialist renewal" remained a slogan. The moderate tactical line of "accord" and "political solutions" was reaffirmed, but no political program that such tactics could further was outlined. The Congress proceedings were too vague to serve as an indicator of any strategic line of march. As a Czechoslovak commentator aptly said about the Polish Party after the Ninth Congress, "The ship floats without knowing where it is going." [26]

CONFRONTATION

Two months after the Ninth Party Congress, Solidarity convened in early September and again in early October in its own two-stage Congress. Like the Party, Solidarity devoted much of the time leading up to its Congress to internal problems; but it also deliberately

[24] Sztandar Mlodych, June 1, 1981.

[25] "We have failed to ... sketch out a vision attractive enough for the majority of the nation..." Warsaw Television, July 15, 1982, in FBIS, II, July 16, 1982.

[26] Jambor commentary, Prague TV, July 17, 1981, in FBIS, II, July 20, 1981.

desisted from presenting an economic program of its own, arguing that that was the business of the government.

Yet even before the first session of the Solidarity Congress in September, the independent trade union had begun to play a more activist social, economic, and (inevitably) political role, proposing governmental reforms and involving itself in state administrative functions. Joint government-Solidarity bodies were established to investigate various shortages and social problems. Symptomatic of this development were the teams of inspectors established in August 1981 to check on abuses in foodstuff distribution; in addition to the usual civil administration and police officials, the teams also included a Solidarity official and a military security service officer.[27] Solidarity's activities had thus become much broader than those of a "trade union."

The Solidarity Congress itself was a free-wheeling affair unique in Soviet bloc history. Official Polish media were denied access, since Solidarity leaders did not receive satisfactory assurances of accurate reporting, but the Solidarity media and Western press and television reported the wide-ranging and often heated discussions. Lech Walesa survived a challenge from more militant Solidarity leaders and was elected chairman. A National Commission headed by a Presidium was established as a national leadership organ, yet regional Solidarity leaderships retained strong powers.

The discussions and programmatic statements of the Congress emphasized above all that, given regime inaction, Solidarity had to be more active in seeking a way out of the national crisis. Only a "new

[27] Radio Warsaw, August 4, 1981, in FBIS, II, August 5, 1981.

social contract" would allow the Polish economy to recover. Essential economic reform required social control of the economy and enterprise self-management. This postulated in turn freer media, a freer legal system, and the opportunity for independent candidates to run for local people's council and even Sejm elections. This platform obviously went well beyond purely economic issues; while affirming alliance with the USSR and not explicitly challenging the primacy of the Communist Party, the Congress declared that Poland must become a "self-governing republic." [28]

After the imposition of martial law, the regime's standard condemnation of Solidarity was that the organization had exceeded the proper boundaries of trade union activity. A number of Western observers (most of them otherwise sympathetic to Solidarity's aspirations) have censured Solidarity for "going too far" and challenging the regime on key administrative and organizational issues. What such views often overlook was the degree to which the governmental and Party apparatus had been paralyzed by mid-1981. The Polish crisis was above all a manifestation of the immobilism and demoralization of the ruling Party, which engendered challenges to the Party apparatus from other organizations. Just as it was the political vacuum created by the decline of the Party, not political ambitions, that explained the prominence of the Polish military in the regime after February 1981, it was the perpetuation of regime paralysis thereafter (the greater role of the military notwithstanding) that accounted for the more activist role of Solidarity in 1981.

[28] The Congress is analyzed in J. B. de Weydenthal, "Solidarity's First National Congress: Stage One," Radio Free Europe Research, September 21, 1981, and "Solidarity's National Congress: Stage Two," ibid., October 19, 1981.

By mid-1981, Solidarity's leaders found themselves negotiating with a regime that seemed increasingly incapable of governing. On the other hand, they found themselves under greater pressure from forces in Solidarity's enterprise organizations and even outside its ranks. "Worker self-management," however defined, was not one of Solidarity's early demands. But in the first half of 1981 a strong movement for worker self-management in enterprises arose outside Solidarity and gained great force among workers in mid-1981. This represented a particular challenge to the union, since it was not readily apparent how the union activity being promoted by Solidarity could be reconciled with co-management of enterprises by workers' councils--a model that explicitly drew upon the Yugoslav precedent. Advocates of worker self-management criticized the regime for not being capable of assuring the efficient functioning of the economy and argued that workers' bodies themselves would have to play a role in this regard. Advocates of worker self-management at the enterprise level also backed proposals to convert the Sejm into a bicameral body (a traditional syndicalist idea), apparently hoping to extend their influence through a new second Parliamentary chamber.[29] Initially there was strong opposition to the self-management movement from some quarters within Solidarity, but at its Congress, Solidarity endorsed enterprise self-management as a key demand.[30]

[29] E.g., interview with Gdansk Solidarity leader Grzegorz Palka, La Repubblica, October 7, 1981, in FBIS, II, October 7, 1981.

[30] The author is indebted to Alexander Smolar for discussions on this point.

Nor were protest marches in the first week of August 1981, which culminated in the clogging of the downtown area in Warsaw by thousands who protested worsening economic conditions, called by Solidarity; rather, the union reluctantly endorsed them in order to remain at the head of a worker movement that Solidarity symbolized more than it controlled.

After the Solidarity Congress, economic conditions worsened. An unending series of localized strike actions continued, even after the national leadership appealed for them to end,[31] and these reflected the deep crisis of the Polish economy, which in 1981 continued to deteriorate. During the first six months of 1981, industrial production fell 12 percent in comparison with the previous year. Coal production declined by 22 percent, with consequent problems in generating sufficient electric energy. Subsidies for consumer goods and unprofitable enterprises represented 40 to 50 percent of the budget deficit, or 12 percent of national income. Most foreign observers attributed the real drop in industrial production more to economic mismanagement, social chaos, and specific supply problems (especially the absence of imported manufacturing goods essential to the new industries built up in the 1970s) than to the institution of the five-day work week in January 1981 or strikes (which were threatened more often than they were held).

The economic situation had deteriorated so rapidly that by mid-1981, planning had become almost entirely ad hoc. Administrative allocations of materials by the government's "Anti-Crisis Operational

[31] At the October 27 session of the National Commission Presidium, Solidarnosc, November 6, 1981.

Staff" only made matters worse. Minor economic reform measures announced at the beginning of 1981 proved to be a sham. The government had announced its intention to slash investments in 1981 and to rationalize the price structure, bringing it in line with world prices and linking wages with productivity. But the Party emerged from the Ninth Congress with "an unrealistic and internally inconsistent reform proposal, a reasonably accurate report on the state of the economy, and an unimaginative and unimpressive stabilization and recovery program. They were clearly not sufficient to deal with the economic crisis." [32]

The economic crisis greatly affected popular consciousness. There was pervasive distrust of the regime. An official public opinion poll conducted on September 14-15, 1981, indicated that 90 percent of the respondents believed there was "unrest and tension" in Poland; 38 percent expressed "confidence in the government"; 43 percent thought the government could somehow overcome the crisis. [33]

In this situation of greater economic deterioration and social tension, the reform movement symbolized by Solidarity made further inroads into the government structure. In the fall of 1981, large segments of the official media espoused the cause of systematic reform. The Sejm, reviewing alternative drafts for a new censorship law (a government draft and a "social" draft backed by Solidarity), adopted what was basically the social draft, which provided for a clear appeals process and exempted some union publications from prepublication censorship (although the censorship office could impose limited

[32] Fallenbuchl, p. 13; also Heinrich Vogel, "Die Wirtschaftskrise Polens--ein Dilemma sowjetischer Hegemonie," Osteuropa, December 1981.

[33] Danuta Zagrodzka, "Niepokoj i napiecie [Unrest and Tension]," Polityka, September 26, 1981.

prepublication censorship for infractions). In a key test of the new censorship system, the Solidarity weekly successfully appealed to the courts a censorship office ban on publishing a reader's letter.[34] As this case indicated, the Sejm increasingly showed itself independent of the Party and government. Under the influence of Solidarity and the Catholic Church, Sejm delegates failed to enact an emergency powers law demanded by Jaruzelski in early November.

Jaruzelski's assumption of the premiership in February 1981 and the Ninth Party Congress of July notwithstanding, by the fall of 1981 the regime was essentially paralyzed. As noted, this immobilism induced and even required Solidarity to play a role far larger than that of a "trade union." Paralysis of the regime also encouraged radical elements within Solidarity to espouse confrontationalist tactics. The Solidarity leadership acted on its belief that it was immune from repression. On the one hand, elements within Solidarity engaged in demonstrative gestures, such as an appeal at the Solidarity Congress to workers elsewhere in Eastern Europe, which provoked the regime (and the USSR) without visibly furthering Solidarity's cause. On the other hand, the union leadership failed to take quiet organizational measures to defend itself against a crackdown which, if attended to early enough, might have stayed or at least postponed such action. Born from the occupation strikes of factories in August 1980, which were sufficiently well-organized and widespread to cause Kania and Jaruzelski to conclude at the time that they could not be broken without large-scale bloodshed, Solidarity neglected preparations for a repetition of such resistance in the heady political atmosphere of late 1981.

[34] Zycie Warszawy, November 4, 1981.

Paralysis of the regime fostered infighting among the political elite. If the Ninth Party Congress preserved the central Party leadership and apparatus, it failed to halt the progressive disintegration of the Party itself, as a unified nationwide organization capable of political and administrative action. In this sense, the Ninth Congress proved to be not a Congress of transformation or even a Congress of continuation, but a Congress of disintegration. What power the Party retained devolved to its constituent provincial Party organizations to an extent even greater than was the case under Gomulka in the 1960s. Decisions of local Party organizations counted more than edicts from Warsaw in efforts to deal with the wave of local strike actions throughout the country in the fall of 1981.

As the authority of the Party center waned after the Ninth Congress, hardline local bodies established outside the regular administrative structure in early 1981, such as the Katowice and Poznan Forums, the Grunwald Association, and the Rzeczywistosc clubs, continued their organizational and propaganda activities.[35] Yet the liberal counterparts to these local bodies that were active before the Congress (especially the "horizontal linkage" movement) did not revive. This was indicative of the balance of forces in many, perhaps most, local and regional Party organizations by the fall of 1981. Disillusioned by the inability of the Party center to define a political program or reach decisions at all, but still subjected to disciplinary actions that the center was able to enforce, liberals and reformers generally became inactive in, resigned from, or were expelled from the Party--leaving the

[35] The latter are critically discussed in Gazeta Poznanska, November 12, 1981.

field to hardline or conservative elements. Gdansk Party leader (and Politburo member) Labacki, himself a moderate, noted in mid-October that "a certain part of the Party" was seeking a turn to tougher measures and that "we have fewer and fewer arguments ... for the first time I am greatly alarmed by this." [36]

It was against this background of the disintegration of the Party that the Fourth Party Plenum convened on October 16, 1981. The hardening of the atmosphere within the Party by that date was reflected in Kania's opening speech to the session, even though he still defended seeking a political solution to the crisis. [37] But Kania's harsher words failed to defuse criticism of his leadership by many Central Committee members; now, unlike the situation at the June 1981 Plenum, his close associates (most importantly, Jaruzelski) did not defend him. Kania then resigned; he had assumed the Party leadership in September 1980, evidently reluctantly, and once he saw that he had lost the support of other key leaders, he withdrew, evidently without trying to save his position. Soviet pressure surely contributed to this change of leadership; there was continued Soviet criticism of the Polish Party leadership during this period (most prominently, in a Soviet Party-government letter of September reacting to the Solidarity Congress), [38] although no explicit Soviet demand for Kania's replacement has come to light.

[36] Glos Wybrzeza, October 15, 1981. This organ of the Gdansk Party organization was itself criticized in local Party organizations for "liberalism" (Dziennik Baltycki, October 15, 1981).

[37] Nowe Drogi, No. 11, 1981.

[38] Trybuna Ludu, September 18, 1981; also Petrov, "[Solidarity Makes a Grab for Power]," Pravda, October 13, 1982.

Kania's resignation was a consequence and an indicator of the paralysis and disintegration of the Party in the fall of 1981; the center no longer controlled local Party organizations, which were on balance increasingly conservative. Nor was the Party as such able to advance a successor to Kania as First Secretary. The Fourth Plenum turned to Jaruzelski and the army.

In assuming leadership of the Party while retaining the posts of premier and defense minister, Jaruzelski concentrated power in his hands in a manner unprecedented for the military leader of a Communist country. The enhanced role of the military in the government, evident since early 1981, was now matched by a militarization of the Communist Party itself, as officers assumed key posts, including the critical position of Party Secretary responsible for personnel (cadres). Soldiers were ordered to help in the coal mines, and "operational groups" of soldiers were dispatched throughout the country to monitor administrative abuse and economic deficiencies. These units won high praise from Solidarity leaders at the time; in retrospect, however, they also served for reconnaissance in planning for martial law.

Contingency planning for martial law must have gotten under way shortly after the birth of Solidarity; few observers of the Polish situation doubted that the army would attempt an internal crackdown if violence occurred on any scale and that corresponding measures had been prepared. After the first stage of the Solidarity Congress ended on September 10 and the Soviet letter of protest was delivered, regime statements took on a harsher tone. A Politburo statement of September 16 reaffirmed the line of national accord but accused Solidarity of

aiming to "seize power," warned of "the heightened counterrevolutionary threat to the state," and declared that the state would use "whatever means the situation required" to defend socialism.[39] The following day, the government "set appropriate tasks for its subordinate organs, as dictated by the evaluation of the situation in the country" and "considered concrete measures, the carrying out of which may prove indispensable to defend socialism." [40] The Fourth Plenum resolution hinted at the possibility of emergency measures, and there were other public indications that force might be used.[41]

Concrete preparations for martial law were probably completed in November, after it became clear to Jaruzelski that his proposed Front of National Accord, advanced in the name of social accord, failed to win support from Solidarity and the Catholic Church; to them, it resembled a refurbished Popular Front, intended to control, rather than extend partnership to, institutions other than the Party. Olszowski explained the proposal as "a concept of a platform of consultation and not of changing the character of executive power." [42] Solidarity and the Church, on the other hand, called for a socioeconomic and political reform program--a "Polish historic compromise"--acceptable to both society and the Party. As an authoritative commentary in the then pro-reform Pax (lay Catholic) newspaper noted,

[39] Zycie Warszawy, September 17, 1982.

[40] Ibid., September 18, 1982.

[41] Remarks of Olszowski at the Ursus factory, Sztandar Mlodych, December 3, 1981; Jaruzelski speech to the Sixth Plenum, Zycie Warszawy, November 30, 1981; Siwak interview, Glos Wybrzeza, November 13-15, 1981.

[42] Sztandar Mlodych, November 13-15, 1981.

A Front of National Accord should signify expansion of the social basis of governing and thus the end of the present monopoly of rule. Restriction of that body to mere consultation ... will not bring about what the present system of rule most lacks: public acceptance.[43]

A regime initiative that, had it been made in November 1980, might have been reciprocated as a good-faith effort to begin a dialogue with society was rejected by Solidarity and the Church in November 1981 as a ploy intended to disrupt that process.

Jaruzelski, Walesa, and Glemp met to discuss the proposed Front on November 4, 1981. Differences between the two sides were highlighted in talks between Solidarity and the government on November 17. Solidarity demanded partnership in a new "Social Economic Council" with executive and not advisory functions, regularized autonomous media access, and the right to put forward candidates in the 1982 local elections--demands unacceptable to the regime. During this period, Solidarity factory activists sought to shunt aside the enterprise Party committees where these remained under the control of hardliners. An occupation strike at the Interior Ministry's fire fighters academy was ended by the police without casualties on December 2. Massive demonstrations were scheduled for December 17 to commemorate the 1970 workers' protests in Gdansk. This increased challenge to the Party's organizational monopoly on the key issues of basic Party organization, control of the media, and responsibility for public order, not Solidarity's verbal radicalism, was the catalyst leading to the decision to impose martial law.[44]

[43] "Konsultacja czy koalicja," Słowo Powszechne, November 17, 1981.

[44] Control of the media was emphasized in Lesław Wojtasik, "Partia a środki masowej informacji," Zycie Partii, September 30, 1981; Olszowski stressed the organizational challenge in his remarks of December 2 at the Ursus factory (Sztandar Młodych, December 3, 1981.)

To be sure, frustrated by regime obduracy, radical Solidarity leaders spoke out more sharply in a meeting of the leadership in Radom on December 3. On December 6, the Warsaw organization called for the formation of "workers' guards." On December 12, some Solidarity leaders demanded a solution to Poland's political impasse through a referendum on the nature of the political system. But by then the decision to impose martial law had already been taken.

If the actions of Solidarity, supported by the Church, constituted an increased political challenge to the regime and Moscow after September 1981, other factors also figured in the decision to impose martial law. Economic conditions worsened, raising the prospect of food riots. Moscow may have increased its private pressure on Jaruzelski (in contrast to its public silence), and it surely advised and assisted in the coup preparations (for which purpose Warsaw Pact Commander-in-Chief Kulikov spent part of late November and early December in Warsaw). [45] On the other hand, Jaruzelski apparently calculated--correctly, as it turned out--that after sixteen months of festering crisis, some Poles had lost some of their initial enthusiasm for Solidarity and would not rally actively to its defense in the way they probably would have after August 1980.

As suggested at several points in the preceding discussion, as the Party weakened after August 1980, the army remained the only state institution able to function efficiently and enjoy a degree of acceptance among the Polish people. As a result, the military, headed by Jaruzelski, became increasingly prominent politically. Jaruzelski

[45] Warsaw TV, November 24, 1981; Beecher dispatch, Boston Globe, December 14, 1981; Guetta dispatch, Le Monde, December 18, 1981.

evidently played a key role in August 1980 in the replacement of Edward Gierek by Stanislaw Kania as Party First Secretary; as noted, he became Premier in February 1981 and Party First Secretary in October 1981.

In August 1980 and for a year thereafter, the military leadership had advocated the use of political means to combat the challenge posed by Solidarity to the Communist system; it abjured the resort to force urged on it by hardline political elements in the Party leadership. As Jaruzelski told the Party Central Committee in October 1980, "the Polish army came out in favor of a political settlement of the conflict." [46] However, the difference between regime moderates (Jaruzelski included) and hardliners was over tactics. Like the hardliners, Jaruzelski opposed the fundamental political and social reforms that gained ground in Poland after August 1980 and sought to reverse them. In late 1981, evidently believing that the possibilities for a political defusing of Solidarity's challenge had been exhausted, and acting under pressure and perhaps a clear ultimatum from Moscow, the Polish military leadership, in the name of preserving Communist rule and the forms of Polish statehood, launched a "state of war" against the Polish nation.

The Polish army had been involved in suppressing the Gdansk rebellion of December 1970 and played a role in the ensuing ouster of Party First Secretary Wladyslaw Gomulka--events which led to Jaruzelski's emergence as a major political personality. Subsequently, the Polish military leadership became to a considerable extent the master of its own house, vis-a-vis the Polish Party leadership and within the framework of ties with the Soviet military. Jaruzelski

[46] Zolnierz Wolnosci, October 6, 1980; speech of Gdansk Party secretary Fiszbach to the Ninth Party Congress, Warsaw TV, July 18, 1981, in FBIS, II, July 20, 1981.

sought to distance the army from internecine strife within the Party leadership. The officer corps had been demoralized as a result of the use of force by military regulars against workers in 1970, and Jaruzelski sought to avoid a recurrence of that situation. He was nonetheless prepared to use force to preserve the Communist system if political measures failed.[47] In acting on that principle in December 1981, Jaruzelski thrust the military institution, whose autonomy and professionalism he had attempted to foster, into a role of supreme political leadership, for which the professional military, just as Jaruzelski personally, was quite ill-prepared.

[47] See the discussion in East European Military Establishments.

III. A STATE OF WAR

Poland's dramatic experiment in peaceful pluralization of a Communist system was cut short on December 13, 1981, not by Soviet tanks, but by Polish security and military forces. The military high command, headed by Jaruzelski, proclaimed the establishment of an all-military Council of National Salvation, formally eclipsing the Party's top bodies. In a well-planned and well-executed Sunday morning surprise operation, the military high command declared a "state of war" (martial law) and effectively blocked movement and communications within the country and with the outside world. Some 7,000 Poles were "interned," a number that included most of the leadership of Solidarity but also thousands of individuals who were "guilty" only of having sympathized with the nationwide social protest movement the union symbolized.

The crackdown was largely bloodless, in part because Solidarity did not think it could happen and was therefore not prepared for active resistance. Like most Western observers, Solidarity's leaders and advisers doubted that a regime that had tolerated widespread, semi-open social protest in the late 1970s and then had retreated step by step after August 1980 in the face of Solidarity's advance was capable of effective internal repression without help from Soviet troops. Asked in late October 1981 if there was not a growing danger of internal repression, Stefan Bratkowski (the liberal head of the journalists' association) declared "that is impossible ... it is impossible to set the army against the people ... it is impossible to expect them to fire on their brothers and their parents." [1] That calculus may well have

[1] Interview in Espresso (Lisbon), October 24, 1981, in FBIS, II,

been (and may remain) true; what it ignored was the possibility that Jaruzelski and the military high command might act preemptively in the army's name, using newly strengthened internal security forces (especially ZOMO, paramilitary police units staffed in part by criminals) supported by some elite military units and backed up by regular forces for internal repression. Given the initial success of martial law, in the short-term sense of suppressing Solidarity and removing its adherents from regime institutions with almost no bloodshed, Jaruzelski and Party "moderates" affiliated with him, such as Rakowski, could make a good case to their domestic Party critics and Moscow that the waiting game the Party had played since August 1980 had been worth the candle: They had never accepted Solidarity as a legitimate pluralist institution, but a crackdown earlier might have unleashed a bloodbath.

Yet however brilliant the technical imposition of martial law, Jaruzelski and his associates launched a "state of war" against the Polish nation, not in pursuit of a positive political conception but as a desperate gamble justified almost openly as the only alternative to Soviet invasion and military suppression.[2] Military juntas have often justified their takeovers in the name of safeguarding national sovereignty against enemies; Poland's Council of National Salvation in

November 3, 1981. Warsaw regional Solidarity chairman Bujak declared "neither the army nor the militia will march against us." (Interview with Le Figaro, December 7, 1981.)

[2] E.g., "there would have been no Polish statehood" (Press conference of deputy premier Janusz Obodowski, Radio Warsaw, January 9, 1982, in FBIS, II, January 11, 1982; "[martial law] was the last chance of avoiding the internationalization [of the crisis]," Jaruzelski letter of January 4, 1982, to the French Communist Party, L'Humanite, January 14, 1982.

effect justified itself by pointing to the immediate danger of invasion by its major declared ally.

In the months after the imposition of martial law, a number of limitations on personal movement and social and political activities decreed on December 13, 1981, were gradually eased, yet essential features of the martial law regime remained in place. The all-military Council of National Salvation continued to eclipse the Party Politburo. Party bodies resumed their activities under the shadow of the Council but lost enormous numbers of members.[3] "Militarization" of Party and government structures through the replacement of civilian by military appointees proceeded apace. For example, 7 of the 47 regional governors (voivodes) were generals, and officers assumed a number of key regional Party positions (such as the post of propaganda secretary in Gdansk.)[4] According to official accounts in May, over 2,000 of the original 7,000 internees remained in isolation camps; Lech Walesa, evidently refusing to bow to the regime or to emigrate, remained a prisoner. Probably thousands of other Poles were sentenced under martial law regulations. Solidarity remained "suspended" and repressed; other organizations that had arisen after August 1980, including Rural Solidarity and the independent student organization, were likewise "suspended" or abolished outright. The Association of Polish Journalists was abolished and replaced by an orthodox body of professional unknowns. The media became more regimented than the Polish media of the early 1970s. The military failed to demobilize the 70,000 conscripts whose normal military tours

[3] 50,000 were ousted in March 1982 alone (PAP in English, April 21, 1982).

[4] See J. G. Goerlich, "Die erste kommunistische Militaerregierung," Europaeische Wehrkunde, March 1982, pp. 110-111.

were extended last fall and to carry out the normal April call-up of new recruits.[5]

The aim of martial law, judging by the ex post facto explanations of Jaruzelski, Rakowski, and others, was to administer a "shock"--to interrupt the process of emerging pluralism and substitute a "socialist renewal" that would avoid the errors of the 1970s (and earlier periods), yet would permit no political challenge to Party control and would carefully channel social self-assertiveness. The protraction of martial law indicated just how illusory the goal of "socialist renewal" was, just as the absence of programmatic statements indicated how little thought went into its content.[6]

The Polish regime and the Soviet leadership evidently felt that there was still no alternative to martial law in Poland for the foreseeable future; overt resistance was limited, but passive resistance continued and popular pro-Solidarity feelings remained strong enough that the regime feared to abolish martial law. Yet martial law was unlikely to prove a stable system of rule. The overshadowing of the Party by the army--Polish Bonapartism--struck at the roots of the Communist system, setting an ominous precedent for the rest of the Communist bloc. The military was increasingly drawn into running the economy as well as political affairs, and its military contribution to the Warsaw Pact (as discussed below) was surely reduced. The internees remained an embarrassment, psychologically and politically; eventually the remainder had to be either released or tried.

[5] Reuter dispatch from Warsaw, April 2, 1982.

[6] The barrenness of political thought within the Party was demonstrated at an "ideological" conference in April. Typical was Jaruzelski's appeal: "Today we must rediscover Marxism-Leninism as if from the beginning, revealing its values for working people and people of science." (Trybuna Ludu, April 3-4, 1982.)

The relationship between Church and state was one of stalemate. Martial law forced the Church into a unique and probably unsustainable relationship vis-a-vis the martial law regime: The Church was provoked but not repressed. Martial law did not worsen the position of the Church per se; although the Church complained of a new wave of atheism, it continued to benefit from the prerogatives it acquired after August 1980, including the radio broadcast of Sunday masses.

Yet the Church's de facto political role increased enormously. After August 1980, the challenge that Solidarity and other popular organizations posed to the regime led the Church to play an unprecedented political role in attempting to mediate between regime and Solidarity while defending social and national values. With the suppression of Solidarity but undiminished popular aspirations for a more liberal and responsive political system, the Church remained the only institutional defender of the interests of Polish society. After December 13, the Church sought first of all to avoid a bloodbath and Soviet invasion. "Keep calm; do not drive our country to a still greater disaster," Glemp appealed in December; as he later explained, "My first task after martial law was to avoid bloodshed, to prevent violent revolution." [7]

But the Church placed equal emphasis on defending the interests of the nation, which it described as "terrorized by military force." Repeatedly it called for an end to martial law, release of the internees and amnesty for those sentenced under martial law, a revival of

[7] Proclamation for December 20, 1981, Vatican Radio in Polish, December 19, 1981, in FBIS, II, December 21, 1981; interview with Nina Darnton, The New York Times Magazine, June 6, 1982.

Solidarity and other independent social organizations, and the resumption of dialogue between the regime and society. These theses were expanded in April by the Primate's Social Council (a body of lay Catholics, whose views the Episcopate endorsed) to include independent governmental advisory bodies and free elections to local people's councils.[8] Social councils were organized in all dioceses and even in some parishes. After the violent suppression of a demonstration in Krakow on May 13, Glemp again appealed to the youth for "prudence and civic wisdom" but reiterated the Church's demand for an independent youth organization.[9] There was in fact never any doubt that the Church would remain true to its thousand-year tradition of espousing the interests of the Polish nation by denouncing martial law repression; what was new was its active assumption of some of the more de facto political functions exercised in 1980-1981 by Solidarity.

The challenge posed by the Church was perhaps the chief reason why martial law could not be maintained indefinitely in Poland. Sooner rather than later, the regime was likely to face the choice: to relax its policies and seek at least a limited reconciliation with Polish society or to crack down harder in an effort to end opposition to its rule. Under the first alternative, martial law would be officially ended, most internees would be set free (some would emigrate and others would be tried), and a confrontation with the Church would be avoided. A new, captive "independent" trade union organized on branch and not

[8] Report on Theses of the Social Council, Vatican Radio in Polish, April 19, 1982, in FBIS, II, April 21, 1982, and in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 22, 1982; Glemp Letter to Polish Bishops, Vatican Radio in Polish, April 16, 1982, in FBIS, II, April 19, 1982.

[9] Glemp homily to the youth of May 19, 1982, Vatican Radio in Polish, May 22, 1982, in FBIS, II, May 24, 1982.

regional lines might be established, a counterpart to the "worker self-management" bodies set up in 1958 as an alternative to the genuine workers' councils that arose spontaneously in 1956. A technocratic economic reform would be attempted. The Party would reemerge as the leading political force, although it would still be heavily influenced by the military.

Such a course of developments would not signify a return to the situation that existed prior to December 13, 1981. Imposition of martial law has fundamentally affected the perceptions of all the participants in the Polish drama of 1980-1981. The lesson of December 13 for both Solidarity and the regime is that they should have been tougher. For Solidarity and for Lech Walesa personally, the lesson (in words attributed to him) is that the regime did not negotiate in good faith, at least after September (when the preparations for martial law evidently got seriously under way). Therefore, according to various underground publications and Solidarity representatives in exile, Solidarity should have moved more quickly to consolidate its gains while organizing itself to resist the kind of crackdown that in fact occurred (a militant lesson not to be confused with Solidarity leaders' calls to avoid senseless violence in the present situation and retrospective self-criticism of verbal radicalism). The lesson for the regime, articulated by Jaruzelski, is that it should have been less willing to compromise in dealing with Solidarity. For both the regime and Solidarity, the policy of dialogue based on growing political pluralism pursued until December 13 has been discredited. Thus while some regime accommodation of popular aspirations is possible, this would not signify a resumption of the political dialogue that had been based on regime weakness and the strength of opposition groups.

Through the spring of 1982, while the regime eased some of the initial restrictions of martial law, it failed to take any significant step toward even a limited accommodation with Polish society. Some influential commentators called for such accommodation in the Polish media, and one explicitly linked accommodation with the need to end Western economic sanctions against Poland.[10] "Moderates" of the martial law regime like deputy prime minister Rakowski, and probably Jaruzelski himself, probably favored such a course but feared to attempt it. Three months after the proclamation of martial law, Rakowski declared that if the interned Solidarity leaders and other prisoners were released, Poland would revert to its pre-December 13 situation in 24 hours[11]--a telling indication of how little effect martial law had had, even in the regime's view, in coercing the Polish nation.

A regime so insecure seemed likely to turn to tougher measures to bolster its rule. The Church could be repressed; Solidarity leaders could be tried; the peasantry could be threatened. (Simultaneously, there could be selective relaxation in other areas.) A harder line could result from greater active or passive popular resistance, economic deterioration, or regime infighting. Popular opposition increased in May and June 1982 and could continue to grow. Whatever conclusions are finally drawn about the "Solidarity period" between August 1980 and December 1981, this powerful and largely spontaneous outpouring of popular and national consciousness in Poland was probably only temporarily submerged. It is difficult to evaluate how desperate the

[10] Janusz Stefanowicz, "Liberum Conspiro," Zycie Warszawy, March 27-28, 1982; Andrzej Olechowski, "[Catastrophe and Rescue]," Polityka, March 20, 1982.

[11] Interview with Aftenposten (Oslo), March 29, 1982, in FBIS, II, April 2, 1981.

economic situation was; some knowledgeable observers still foresee the possibility of a "hunger holocaust," and in such circumstances the regime could turn to draconian measures.

Hardliners (Olszowski, or the even more rigid Milewski, Grabski, or Siwak) might, with Soviet support, gain greater influence over or even replace Jaruzelski. They have openly called for trials of Solidarity activists, demanded a return to a single, transmission-belt trade union, and in effect criticized Jaruzelski for excessive moderation.[12] Such views do not necessarily represent the dominant Soviet line (which showed itself pragmatic enough in Czechoslovakia in 1969 to back the more moderate Husak over hardliners Indra or Rytir), yet they could win some Soviet support. While Jaruzelski seems indispensable to the Soviets for the time being, he is hardly the Kremlin's ideal of a Polish Party leader: He is the Polish Bonaparte, and he was guilty (and stands publicly accused, in the Soviet letter of June 1981) of making "unprincipled compromises" with Solidarity for much too long.

A turn toward more repressive measures would increase greatly the chances of active violent popular protest--still a very real possibility in any case. Limited unrest could probably be put down by the same internal security forces that were in the forefront of the crackdown on December 13. Yet it would probably not be so easy a second time; underground Solidarity publications have pointed out that the ZOMO units employed on December 13, while mobile, were actually not numerous and that strikes could have resumed in individual factories after ZOMO had moved on.[13] And after the introduction of martial law, just as

[12] E.g., interview with Grabski, Argumenty, March 14, 1982; report on a hardline internal Party bulletin, Margueritte dispatch, Le Figaro, April 14, 1982.

[13] "August 1980, December 1981, What Next," cited in a Fisher dispatch, Los Angeles Times, June 1, 1982.

before, it is unlikely that domestic violence which the security organs were unable to handle could be put down by the Polish army acting alone.

Published military discussions indicate something of the tensions and uncertainties within the military on and after December 13, 1981. Officers were concerned with the reliability of conscripts, especially those called up in the fall of 1980 and retained in service after their normal term of service had expired. Conscripts and officers alike feared that they would find themselves in the position of having to fire on fellow Poles. Officers were "shocked" by the casualties at the Wujek mines. Some officers viewed martial law as a consequence of personal infighting among Party leaders. Vignettes of military units deployed around factories to back up the internal security intervention forces indicated real potential for explosion. A lieutenant recalled what happened at the Praga automobile works:

My company had to block gate number 5.... When we arrived I saw that there were a lot of people standing by the fence talking with the workers on the other side. I gave orders that they be removed immediately, since no one knew what might happen. Then one of the civilians asked: "So, are you going to shoot your own people, are you that kind of Poles?" He would have gotten in trouble if I had not restrained my troops, whose nerves were already stretched to the breaking point...[14]

Such accounts support the view that the Polish army would not be able on its own to suppress serious domestic violence and that Soviet military intervention would probably result. Hence the possibility of a Soviet invasion of Poland has not disappeared, the military-led

[14] Eugeniusz Walczuk, "Zolnierska rzecz," Wojsko Ludowe, March 1982, p. 69; and in the same issue, "Czy wojsko mialo prawo wyjsc z koszar?" pp. 25-27 and "Doswiadczenia i pierwsze wnioski," pp. 72-77; Zolnierz Wolnosci, December 19, 1982.

crackdown notwithstanding. Indeed, the Church has maintained that the imposition of martial law made civil conflict and, by extension, Soviet invasion more likely. Under conditions of large-scale violence, fissures would probably appear within the Polish army. Although the popularity of the Polish army has declined greatly in Poland since December 13, Poles evidently still distinguish favorably between the army and the internal security forces. Even under martial law, a Soviet invasion could lead elements of the armed forces to resist, and thus could result in a reforging of some ties between the Polish army and the Polish nation.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

WHAT NEXT?

As this Note was completed in late June 1982, Poland's political situation remained frozen. In May and June, some of the more restrictive measures of martial law, including the nightly curfew, were relaxed, but some were selectively reimposed after widespread popular demonstrations. There was no indication that the regime was ready to attempt even a limited dialogue or accommodation with Polish society--despite the repeated appeals of the Church hierarchy and the negotiations or posturing over the possibility of another Papal visit in August 1982. Nor was there yet any sign of a turn to tougher repressive measures. In the 1960s Poland experienced a "small stabilization," based on a mutual standoff between regime and society and a degree of relative toleration on the part of both. This was not a model for Poland in 1982. Jaruzelski's attempted "large stabilization" seemed, in contrast, bogus. Policies were formulated and a political system quickly evolved in Poland in early 1957, after the "Polish October," whereas Poland in June 1982 remained in suspense. The continuation of pro-Solidarity demonstrations throughout the country in the wake of demonstrations in Warsaw, Gdansk, and other cities on May 1 and May 3, in Krakow on May 13, in Wroclaw and Poznan on June 13, and thereafter in Wroclaw and other cities suggested that social protest was growing. The regime may have relaxed martial law in late spring 1982 just enough to bring about a sharp increase in such popular protests. Partial accommodation remained a possible outcome--one vigorously pursued by the

Church. Yet on balance, harsher repression seemed to be a more likely outcome--with the ensuing possibility of domestic violence and Soviet intervention. In brief, the Polish crisis continues.

The future course of developments in Poland depends importantly on the state of the economy; Western and Polish appraisals range from bleak to hopeless. The standard of living has declined to a level lower than that of ten years ago. Poland remains a potentially economically sound country, endowed with abundant natural resources and a rich labor pool. But its economy has been so mismanaged, disorganized, and perhaps misoriented to Western markets that it is difficult even for optimistic Western economic analysts to outline a scenario for economic revival in Poland. Some reorientation to Comecon markets seems inevitable, but Poland's economic officials have appeared to assume that additional Western credits would be forthcoming to finance such a reorientation--a most unlikely prospect.[1]

As of June 1982, economic officials and specialists continued to talk of preparations for far-reaching economic reform, yet apart from the massive price increases of foodstuffs and other consumer goods decreed in January 1982, such schemes seemed to involve only minor tinkering with the economic system. There was demonstrated interest in the Hungarian experience, but no sign of Hungarian-style economic reform. That was not solely the consequence of a lack of vision on the part of economic planners. The last time the regime enjoyed the economic latitude to make relatively painless substantial adjustments in economic policy was in 1973-1974, when Poland still enjoyed an economic "buffer." Projections of future developments in Poland thus must assume

[1] Interview with Finance Minister Marian Krzak, Radio Warsaw, April 6, 1982, in FBIS, II, April 7, 1982.

the continuation of very serious--if not desperate--economic problems and ensuing sociopolitical tensions.

The only alternative appears to be a program of far-reaching economic reforms, incorporating consumer austerity, substantial dismantling of the rigid mechanism of central planning, and hard-currency credits. All three conditions presuppose far-reaching political reforms--the "Polish historic compromise" widely discussed in Poland in 1981. Yet after the experience of 1980-1981, the Polish United Workers' Party appears even less inclined or able to come to terms with significant social pluralism in Poland. And even if it were otherwise disposed, it would need to gain the consent of a Soviet leadership that would seem less tolerant of such a development the second time around.

WAS SOLIDARITY FOREDOOMED?

Western observers who followed the Polish situation after mid-1980 foresaw a number of possible outcomes. For example, participants in a Rand-organized workshop on Poland in August 1981 discussed four possible outcomes:

1. The Party would gradually erode Solidarity and other autonomous structures and restore some version of the pre-1980 order.
2. Political stability would be achieved on the foundation of "a Polish historic compromise" by the Party with the Church and Solidarity, institutionalizing post-August democratic gains while retaining Party rule in some sharply diminished form.
3. Instability would be protracted.

4. Pervasive destabilization would lead to Soviet invasion.[2]

In fact, gradual rollback was clearly the regime's preferred strategy, but as time went on, it was the regime, not Solidarity, that steadily gave ground. So, once Jaruzelski became Party First Secretary, the regime attempted sudden repression. The reasons why that alternative was not sooner and better distinguished by observers of the Polish scene should be noted. The possibility that the regime might attempt to employ Polish armed forces to deal with domestic large-scale disorder was widely discussed in the West. Such views generally assumed, however, that the regime could not count on the army to be reliable if used against Solidarity, which was expected to mount massive resistance, and that any attempt to employ the army in a repressive role would probably serve only as a precursor to intervention by Soviet forces. What was generally not anticipated before the fall of 1981 was that Jaruzelski and the military high command might act preemptively in the army's name, using beefed-up, reliable internal security forces backed up by military forces to bring Solidarity to heel. Through mid-1981 it was generally assumed that the Party would either desist from forcible efforts to suppress Solidarity or would in the end have to rely upon the USSR to preserve its rule. But as tension mounted in Poland in late 1981, the possibility that the regime could repress Solidarity without Soviet intervention did receive greater attention by Western observers.[3]

[2] Poland After the Ninth Party Congress.

[3] E.g., Robert Ludic, in Los Angeles Times, November 3, 1981.

In retrospect, the analyses of mid-1981 suffered from two deficiencies: First, they underestimated the ability of the Polish military leadership, not to employ soldiers against the populace, but to build up and utilize elite internal security units supported by military units in a surprise nationwide crackdown. Although the previous Party leaderships had been unwilling or unable to utilize the internal security apparatus to suppress widespread dissent in the late 1970s, the military leadership was able to do so in 1981, having first enhanced the capabilities of elite internal security units (especially the paramilitary policy units, ZOMO) intended for this purpose.

Second, Western analyses generally accepted too uncritically the notion, espoused by both supporters and detractors of Solidarity in Poland, that Solidarity would effectively resist an attempted crackdown and that therefore such an operation would involve sufficient violence to make Soviet involvement virtually assured. Solidarity's leaders, who by and large grew up in the relatively tolerant atmosphere of Poland in the 1960s and 1970s, seemed to generally assume that the regime "would not dare" to crack down--and thus neglected the organizational preparations that might in fact have stayed or at least postponed such a move. "Solidarity was a giant with feet of clay," Warsaw Solidarity leader Kulerski noted.[4] Solidarity's defeat on December 13, 1981, was perhaps the best proof of its spontaneous nature; and it demonstrated that mass enthusiasm is no substitute for organization--in any political system.

[4] Tygodnik Mazowsze (clandestine), reprinted in La Repubblica (Rome), March 31, 1982, in FBIS, II, April 6, 1982.

Was martial law "inevitable"? How likely is it that the other possible alternatives listed above--or still others--might have materialized? More generally, was the Solidarity revolution foredoomed?

A "historic compromise" between regime and society (as represented by Solidarity and the Church) was improbable. Such an outcome would have involved a degree of liberalization of the Polish United Workers' Party unacceptable to the USSR and probably incompatible with the very survival of the Party. It would also have involved a degree of central control and discipline on the part of Solidarity that was inconsistent with its nature as a largely spontaneous mass movement.

The state of affairs as of the fall of 1981 certainly could have been perpetuated; the chances for this would have been increased had Solidarity cultivated its capacity for organized resistance, on the one hand, while dampening the voices of its more radical activists on the other. Yet, as argued above, the challenge to the Leninist Party system that Solidarity spearheaded and symbolized was inherently organizational, while the most radical demands by Solidarity officials, especially the call for a nationwide referendum on the political system, clearly postdated the regime's decision to implement martial law.

Soviet intervention did not occur in 1980 and early 1981 because, as noted earlier, Moscow feared the prospects of an invasion of Poland that was almost certain to meet with active resistance and retained hope that the Polish regime could itself eventually salvage the situation. By fall 1981, the Soviet leadership must have concluded that the imposition of martial law by Polish security and military forces had a good chance of succeeding. But the fact that the Soviets did not invade

should not be interpreted as indicating that invasion was not a real and present danger in late 1980 and 1981. The Soviet leadership did not order mobilization solely as an instrument of psychological warfare against Poland. There was also very real potential for domestic violence, which could have broken out at almost any time after August 1980, perhaps escalating from a minor local dispute, and could well have forced the Soviet leadership's hand.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CRISIS

In mid-1982, Moscow and the Polish leadership can doubtless draw considerable satisfaction from the fact that Solidarity and the social forces associated with it have been suppressed and the ensuing challenge to Soviet-style Party rule has been blunted. As compared with the situation in Poland in late 1981, Moscow can be satisfied with subsequent developments. But nearly seven months after the imposition of martial law, the balance sheet for the USSR is hardly exclusively positive.

First, the Polish regime has yet to construct a viable "post-Solidarity" political system, and Soviet media commentaries indicate Soviet awareness of that fact. Moscow cannot yet consider the Polish crisis over. The Soviet leadership must find itself in the position of extending increased financial assistance to Poland while wondering whether in the end the Jaruzelski regime will be able to "normalize" Poland.

Second, while the combination of economic problems and regime weakness that spawned Solidarity does not exist to the same degree elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the phenomenon of Solidarity has contributed to a further undermining of the legitimacy of the Soviet

system throughout the region. Solidarity flourished for sixteen months and during that period, by regime admission, attracted nearly ten million Poles (among them a million Party members) to its banners. It received widespread publicity, however negative, throughout Eastern Europe and the USSR. As such, it gave the lie, more dramatically than any previous movement in postwar Eastern Europe, to the Communist Party's claim to rule in the name of the working class. Thus, the Polish crisis will, over time and throughout the region, reinforce in the minds of the rulers as well as the ruled in Eastern Europe the sense of the fundamental illegitimacy and fragility of the Soviet-style political institutions imposed at the end of World War II. The massive display of lack of confidence in the Polish system manifested in Solidarity must be all the more worrisome for the Soviet leadership, since it has occurred at a time of increasing social and economic difficulties throughout Eastern Europe.

Third, the Soviet view of the Polish military must be ambivalent. The Polish military command doubtless served Soviet purposes in December 1981 in assuming supreme political power and declaring a domestic "state of war" in order to halt the pluralist tendencies that had been unleashed in Poland after August 1980. But however much this was to Soviet advantage, the assumption of supreme political power by the Polish military was an ominous precedent for other Communist leaderships--including the Soviet itself.

Moreover, the involvement of the Polish military in enforcing martial law and running the country surely reduced the utility of Polish forces as a potential contribution to Soviet military power for use in European military contingencies. Since the early 1960s the USSR has

sponsored the modernization of the East European armed forces and allocated to those forces an important role in Soviet plans for "coalition warfare." The most important East European force by far is the Polish army, the third largest army in Europe, with over 300,000 regulars.[5] One consequence of the Polish crisis has been to turn the Polish army inward: Its senior officer corps is preoccupied with attempting to rule Poland and salvage its economy; the loyalty of its conscript regulars (a cross-section of Polish society, perhaps half of them former Solidarity members) remains suspect; the military economy and mobilization base are in rapid decline; substantial military units were redeployed to back up internal security forces.[6] It is doubtful that in such circumstances the Polish army could carry out its intended missions within the Warsaw Pact or that the Soviet general staff could count heavily on the Polish army in any European conflict.[7] The Polish crisis thus dramatizes the vulnerabilities inherent in the kinds and level of Soviet reliance on East European military forces. The crisis sharply underlines the Soviet dilemma: Should the USSR rely on uncertain East European military capabilities or devote more of its own military resources to the region?[8] It suggests that the Soviet High

[5] See East European Military Establishments.

[6] The extent of mobilization and repositioning of the ground forces are indicated in a series of articles in Przegląd Wojsk Lądowych, Nos. 1 and 2, 1982.

[7] An article in the military's Main Political Administration journal discussed these weaknesses as of 1981, concluding that they "influence negatively the strength and possibilities of the entire defense coalition"; the same liabilities increased in 1982 ("Czy wojsko miało prawo wyjść z koszar?" Wojsko Ludowe, March 1982. A statement of the "Experience and the Future" circle of liberal intellectuals likewise stressed that in implementing martial law, the Polish army had been distracted from its WTO tasks. (Excerpts in Die Zeit, May 11, 1982.)

[8] See the discussion in A. Ross Johnson, The Warsaw Pact: Soviet Military Policy in Eastern Europe, The Rand Corporation, P-6583, July 1981.

Command may begin an "agonizing reappraisal" of coalition warfare strategy in the Warsaw Pact.

Even after the imposition of martial law, the Polish crisis has thus involved very real costs for the USSR, including the demonstrated illegitimacy of Soviet-style political systems and diversion of Soviet-controlled military and economic resources to intra-bloc problems.

These costs are accompanied by the prospect of heightened instability in Eastern Europe. The Polish crisis has dramatically challenged the assumption--widespread in the West in the 1960s and 1970s--that the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe will gradually (or even inevitably) liberalize. Repression in Poland may have discredited the very notion of peaceful change in Eastern Europe, and this could prove to be the most important and ominous consequence of the crisis. In the words of Adam Michnik, one of the Solidarity advisors, "Consciousness of the fruitlessness of peaceful forms of opposition can have catastrophic consequences." [9] Thirty-seven years after the end of World War II, the East European political systems remain artificial and unstable constructs which cannot be reformed by minor tinkering. Solidarity was the first mass movement in Eastern Europe to strive for the peaceful transformation of the Communist system while accepting a primary role for the Communist Party and alliance with the USSR. An alternative--now more rather than less likely and for which the Polish and Soviet regimes, not Solidarity, are accountable--is upheaval in the Soviet empire. That is a liability for the USSR, since it would

[9] Der Spiegel, March 8, 1982.

increase the costs of its empire. But it also raises the prospect of potentially dangerous violent instability in the Eastern part of Europe.

What are the policy implications of the Polish crisis for the West? This is a large question whose detailed consideration must be deferred for later consideration. However, it seems clear that the crisis, whatever its ultimate outcome, will have potentially momentous consequences for the rest of Eastern Europe and for Soviet relations with Eastern Europe. This makes it imperative to rethink fundamental Western assumptions about the future of Eastern Europe in East-West relations. It does not seem likely that the uncritically accepted policy formulas of the past will be appropriate for the Eastern Europe of the 1980s.

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